



Afrobarometer Paper No. 24

**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN  
SOUTH AFRICA: THE PEOPLE'S  
VIEW**

by Robert Mattes, Christiaan Keulder,  
Annie B. Chikwana, Cherrel Africa, and  
Yull Derek Davids

**A comparative series of national public  
attitude surveys on democracy, markets  
and civil society in Africa.**



The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)  
6 Spin Street, Church Square  
Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
27 21 461 2559 • fax: 27 21 461 2589  
Mattes (bob@idasact.org.za)

Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)  
14 West Airport Residential Area  
P.O. Box 404, Legon-Accra, Ghana  
233 21 776 142 • fax: 233 21 763 028  
Gyimah-Boadi (cdd@ghana.com)

Michigan State University (MSU)  
Department of Political Science  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824  
517 353 3377 • fax: 517 432 1091  
Bratton (mbratton@msu.edu)

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Robert Mattes is co-founder and co-Director of the Afrobarometer. He is also Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies, and Director of the Democracy In Africa Research Unit in the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town. Christian Keulder is Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research in Windhoek Namibia, and is also the Afrobarometer National Research Partner for Namibia. Annie B. Chikwanha is a Researcher in the Public Opinion Service of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. Cherrel Africa is a Senior Researcher in the Public Opinion Service of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. Yul Derek Davids is Manager of the Public Opinion Service of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

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Editors: Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes

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# **Democratic Governance In South Africa: The People's View**

## **Executive Summary**

South Africa is now eight years into its inclusive democracy. The overall direction and success of this democratic experiment can be judged with various types of evidence. This report focuses on one type, that is, the opinions of South African citizens about the overall direction of their new democracy. Rather than looking to expert judgments or to measures of formal rights, we believe that the views of ordinary citizens, as the ultimate consumers of what democratic governments supply, can offer perhaps the most conclusive assessment of the quality of democratic governance.

### **The Afrobarometer**

This evidence is supplied by the South African version of the Afrobarometer. The Afrobarometer is an international collaborative enterprise of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Centre for Democracy and Development in Ghana (CDD-Ghana), and Michigan State University. Round 2 of the Afrobarometer is currently conducted in 15 counties across the continent between July 2002 and July 2003. In South Africa, Idasa commissioned Citizen Surveys (Pty.)Ltd. to carry out the fieldwork. Citizen Surveys interviewers travelled to 600 randomly selected sites across the country to interview a random stratified nationally representative sample of 2,400 South Africans between 13 September and 13 October 2002. A sample size of this size yields overall estimates that are accurate to within +/- 2 percentage points.

### **Key Findings**

In general, all South Africans are becoming more positive about the overall democratic regime, and more optimistic about where it will be in ten years time. Yet within that outer shell, South Africans offer a great deal of negative assessments about how the country is actually governed, assessments to which South Africa's government would do well to listen.

- 54 percent now give an overall positive mark to "our current system of government," up 18 points since 1995 when only 36 percent did so. 46 percent of whites offer a positive assessment compared to only 12 percent in 1995.
- 74 percent offer an optimistic evaluation of how they believe the political system will be in 10 years time. Whites' positive assessments have increases from 24 percent in 1995 to 44 percent.

The democratic system enjoys an important, but insufficiently wide base of popular legitimacy. As a form of political authority, the "reach" of the democratic political system is quite limited.

- Just two thirds feel that instruments of state authority such as the Courts (68 percent), Police (67 percent) or Revenue Service (60 percent) have the right to make people abide by their decisions and rules. Only 60 percent feel that the Constitution reflects the values and aspirations of all South Africans.
- Popular trust in political institutions remains at relatively low levels. Just over one third trust the President (37 percent), and just under a third trust Parliament (31 percent). One quarter trust their Provincial Government (28 percent), Premier (28 percent) or Local Government (24 percent).

- Trust in other institutions has declined sharply since 2000 such as the SABC (from 62 percent to 47 percent), the IEC (49 to 31 percent) and SANDF (41 percent to 32 percent).

Public assessments of the amount and quality of democracy supplied by the political system are declining.

- Just one half (47 percent) of all South Africans say that the country is fully or largely democratic, down sharply from 60 percent two years ago. Another one-third (37 percent) say the country is democratic but with “major problems.”
- Just one in ten feel that elected leaders act in their best interests (13 percent) or listen to what they have to say (11 percent) “all” or “most of the time.” More than one third say they “never” do this.
- Forty-four percent are “satisfied with the way democracy works in South Africa,” down from 52 percent in 2000 and 63 percent in 1998.

One of the few positive results to come out of this set of results are that public assessments of the extent of official corruption have improved significantly over the past two years. While large majorities still think corruption exists in government, people seem to think that a smaller proportion of public officials are involved.

- The proportion saying “all” or “most” government officials are involved in corruption fell from 50 to 27 percent in 2002, for MPs it fell from 45 to 22 percent, and for the President’s Office from 25 to 13 percent.

While people are confident that government can solve the major problems facing the country, not everyone is convinced that it has the capacity to enforce its rules. People’s experiences obtaining services from government also suggest important problems of state capacity.

- Over a majority still feel that government can solve “all” (17 percent) or “most” (40 percent) of this country’s major problems. Just one in ten say “very few” (11 percent) or “none” (2 percent).
- While most people have found it easy to obtain government services to register to vote (86 percent), get a place for a child in a primary school (77 percent), or get an official document (70 percent), just one half say its easy to get a household service (50 percent), and four in ten say its easy to get help from the police (40 percent). Just 23 percent say its easy to get a government loan or grant.
- An average of just 1 in 20 tell us that they have been victimized in the past year by corrupt officials while trying to obtain these government services.
- While a wide majority feel that authorities could enforce the law if they commit a crime (78 percent), avoided tax (69 percent), or get services without paying (66 percent), significant proportions feel that they would stand a better chance to get away with such offences.

Public responses confirm that there are strong regional disparities in government capacity.

- For instance, while just one in ten people in Northern Cape (12 percent) or one in five in Western Cape (22 percent) reported difficulty obtaining household services, this was true of four

in ten in Northwest (42 percent), KwaZulu-Natal (44 percent), and one half of people in Limpopo (55 percent).

- An average of one in ten felt they could get away a crime, or not paying taxes or for services in Northern Cape (11 percent), or Western Cape, Free State, Northwest or Gauteng (13 percent each), in contrast to 22 percent in KwaZulu-Natal and 32 percent in Limpopo..
- Just 1 percent reported encounters with corrupt government officials in Free State and Northern Cape, compared to 6 percent in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal and 13 percent in Limpopo.

Following a sharp drop in job approval in 2000, public evaluations of the performance of key political leaders over the past twelve months has remained relatively constant.

- One half the public approve of the job President Thabo Mbeki (51 percent) has done over the past year. Under one half are satisfied with the performance of the Members of Parliament (45 percent), Members of Provincial Legislative Assembly (37 percent), Premier (43 percent) and Local Councillors (23 percent).
- The most popular Premiers are Limpopo's Adv Ngoako Ramathlodi (74 percent), Free State's Ms Isabella Winkie Dariko (59 percent) and Northern Cape's Mr Manne Dipico (53 percent). The least popular are Gauteng's Mr Mbhazima Shilowa (36 percent), Eastern Cape's Rev Makhenkesi Stofile (33 percent) and Western Cape's Marthinus Van Schalkwyk (20 percent).
- Public dissatisfaction with local government continues. No sign that the massive reorganization that culminated in the 2000 local government elections has had any positive impact in terms of greater public esteem. Forty percent of those who live in small towns approved of the performance of their Councillors compared to 34 percent of those who live in rural areas and 27 percent of those who live in a metropolitan local authority.
- Public approval of government policy is strongest with regard to the provision of welfare payments (73 percent), education (61 percent), and health services (54 percent).
- However, government comes in for quite critical evaluations with regard to managing the economy (38 percent), its policy toward Zimbabwe (31 percent), fighting corruption (29 percent), reducing crime (23 percent), making sure everyone has enough to eat (17 percent), narrowing the income gap (19 percent), controlling prices (17 percent) and creating jobs (9 percent).

Of possibly greatest concern, South Africans across the board seem to feel that the country is being governed no better than it was under the apartheid regime.

- Just 32 percent of all respondents (and just 38 percent of blacks) think that government is more trustworthy today than it was under apartheid. Only 24 percent (26 percent of black respondents) feel that it is less corrupt. 39 percent (43 percent of blacks) say it is better able to enforce the law. And 41 percent (46 percent of blacks) feel it is more effective in delivering services.

While much of this may be fuelled by a fading memory of just what life used to be like then, the fact that such perceptions exist signals some deeply rooted problems in how the state and government not only “deliver” services and economic goods to ordinary people, but also how it represents and interacts with citizens.



## **Democratic Governance In South Africa: The People's View**

South Africa is now eight years into its inclusive democracy. The overall direction and success of this democratic experiment can be judged with various types of evidence. This report focuses on one type of evidence, that is, the opinions of South African citizens about the overall direction of their new democracy. That is, rather than looking to measures based on expert judgments or the existence of formal constitutional rights, we believe that the views of ordinary citizens, as the ultimate consumers of what democratic governments supply, can offer perhaps the most conclusive assessment of the quality of democratic governance.

We use public opinion measures to assess democratic governance in South Africa from several different angles. We begin by assessing people's views of the overall authority and legitimacy of the democratic political system, as well as the degree of trust and confidence they place in the occupants of that system. Then we turn to look at popular assessments of the quality of governance, focussing specifically on popular assessments of how much democracy is supplied by the political system, as well as the degree to which it is free of corruption.

We also use public opinion to offer fresh insight into the capacity of South Africa's democratic system: that is, to what extent are citizens confident that it has the capacity to address this society's pressing problems. Do people believe that government is able to enforce its own laws and rules on people who break them. Finally, we ask people about their actual interactions with government to tell us whether government has the capacity to deliver services to its citizens effectively. To what extent are people able to make use of a range of government services, and to do so with ease and without being victimized by corrupt officials?

We then move to a discussion of more traditional measures of public approval of government performance, information that can provide elected leaders and policy-makers with a level of popular feedback that can fill the long gaps between elections, and do so with a level of precision that election results themselves cannot provide.

Finally, we ask people to judge the overall direction of democratic governance by getting them to compare the way government works today to the way it worked during the apartheid era, as well as to express their hopes and fears about the future of democratic governance in South Africa.

### **Methodology**

This evidence is supplied by the South African version of the Afrobarometer. Idasa commissioned Citizen Surveys (Pty.) Ltd. to carry out the fieldwork and draw the sample with the assistance of the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). The sample was based on the 1996 Census. Enumerator Areas were stratified by province, race, and type of area (urban, rural) and 600 were randomly chosen in with the probability proportionate to population. However, disproportionate oversamples were drawn in Northern Cape and among Indian respondents to ensure sufficient numbers of cases for analysis. A gender quota was introduced to ensure that every other interview was done with a female. All interviews were then post-weighted to ensure that they were reflected proportionately. The questionnaire was translated into all 11 official national languages; interviewers were all fluent in the languages of the areas in which they lived; and each respondent was able to choose the language of the interview.

Citizen Surveys interviewers travelled to the 600 randomly selected Enumerator Areas and conducted four random interviews at each site between 13 September and 13 October 2002 to obtain

a random stratified nationally representative sample of 2,400 South Africans. This sample size yields overall estimates that are accurate to within +/- 2 percentage points.

## **Legitimacy**

### *The Moral Authority of the State*

A democratic government cannot make every decision based on consensus, nor can it afford to take a vote on every policy decision, especially those decisions that are matters of executive and administrative policy (rather than legislation). Almost all legislative and administrative policy outcomes will be opposed by significant minorities, and sometimes even by majorities. As Abraham Lincoln put it: “You can’t please all the people, all of the time.”

Neither could any government last if it had to coerce people to obey every decision at the point of a gun. Thus, any government depends on a widely held sense of legitimacy amongst the citizenry in order to obtain popular compliance with its decisions without having to resort to force. A sense of legitimacy gives government decisions a form of moral authority. At its broadest, this sense of legitimacy comprises the belief that those in power have a right to make binding decisions, and that those decisions ought to be obeyed even if one disagrees with a specific decision. This sense may flow from the fact that the rules that govern the state (e.g. the Constitution) reflect widely accepted values and norms. It may flow from the fact the occupants of the state (the incumbents) can be trusted to do the right thing most of the time. Legitimacy may also flow from the fact that those in government are free of corruption, respond to public opinion, and tend to govern effectively.

Legitimacy constitutes a form of “diffuse” support for a political system, a form of support that does not have to be earned but rather inheres in the institutions of the political system rather than the current occupants of those institutions (which is referred to as “specific” support).<sup>1</sup> A legitimate political system is one that can depend on compliance from citizens, business, and civil society not simply because they happen to agree with its decisions, but because people understand that the government has the right to make laws, and that those laws ought to be obeyed because, in the words of the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s license payment campaign, “it’s the right thing to do.”<sup>2</sup> According to David Easton, diffuse support constitutes a “reserve of support that enables a system to weather the many storms when [policy] outputs cannot be balanced off against [popular] input demands. It is a kind of support that a system does not have to buy with more or less direct benefits.”<sup>3</sup> A legitimate political system is likely to be a more stable political system. Legitimacy acts as a buffer to cushion the system against shocks from short-term dissatisfaction with policy and performance.<sup>4</sup> It should bring about more cooperative behaviour on the part of its citizens; they are more likely to obey the law and refrain from anti-system behaviour (e.g. protest) if they view the sources of those laws as legitimate.<sup>5</sup>

How much legitimacy has accrued to South Africa’s new political institutions? Is there yet a widely shared belief that it has a right to make decisions, and that people ought to comply with those decisions whether or not they agree with them? Responses to this set of questions suggest that while the South African democratic political system enjoys an important base of legitimacy amongst a majority of the population, it is not yet widespread or consensual. Large proportions of the public do not automatically defer to the authority of the Constitution or state enforcement agencies.

While experts say that South Africa has one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world, the public’s view is rather different. Sixty percent of South Africans agree that the “constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the South African people.” A similar proportion (60 percent) agrees that “the tax department (SARS) always has the right to make people

pay taxes.” A larger proportion of two thirds feel that the Courts have the right to “make decisions that people always have to abide by” (68 percent) and that the police “always have the right to make people obey the law” (67 percent).

There is no evidence that these perceptions are becoming more positive. The proportion who now say that the Constitution symbolizes the hopes and principles of the nation is statistically no different than it was four years ago. However, there is some evidence that this base of legitimacy, while not high may be becoming shared across important societal dividing lines. While we see racial differences in responses, they are not nearly as large as we might have witnessed in past. In terms of respect for the Constitution, black respondents are significantly more favourable than Indian, white and coloured. White respondents have become far more positive about the Constitution over the past five years.

Yet the pattern reverses itself when it comes to the authority of the SARS with four fifths of whites, far more than any other group, adamant that it should always be able to make people pay taxes (though this could also probably result from a perception amongst whites that they shoulder a disproportionate share of the tax burden or that others are able to get away with not paying their fair share).<sup>6</sup> In 1998, more than double the number of black respondents saw the constitution as legitimate, compared to just a 10 percentage point difference in 2002. We see no real substantial differences in legitimacy when we examine these attitudes by income, education, age, or gender.

#### *State Legitimacy in South Africa (2002)*

|  | South Africa | Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|--|--------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the South African people. | 60           | 65    | 55    | 44       | 56     |
| The courts have the right to make decisions that people always have to abide by.   | 68           | 70    | 65    | 62       | 60     |
| The police always have the right to make people obey the law                       | 67           | 70    | 67    | 54       | 53     |
| The tax department (SARS) always has the right to make people pay taxes            | 60           | 58    | 80    | 52       | 52     |

% “Agree / Strongly Agree”

#### *State Legitimacy in South Africa (1998-2000)*

|          | November 1998 | July / August 2000 | September / October 2002 |
|----------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Total    | 58            | 59                 | 60                       |
| Black    | 65            | 67                 | 65                       |
| White    | 30            | 25                 | 55                       |
| Coloured | 50            | 55                 | 44                       |
| Indian   | 49            | 30                 | 56                       |

“Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the South African people.” (% “Agree / Strongly Agree”)

#### *Trust In Political Institutions*

A sense of trust or confidence in political institutions is another facet of legitimacy. Ideally, trust should also provide a form of support for the political system that is independent of the type of support gained through popular satisfaction with current policy output.<sup>7</sup> Our interest in trust is based on the notion that citizens do not have to watch their leaders constantly, that they can trust them to act in their interests in the great majority of cases where democratic leaders are unable to canvass public opinion. As with the sense of the moral authority of the state, a sense of trust in government can serve as a reservoir of support that can take a country through difficult economic periods or the inevitable tradeoffs during severe transformation.

To what degree do South Africans trust their leaders? Evidence from opinion surveys since 1995 suggests the following. While there are some important variations, around one third now place a high level of trust in political and state institutions, and slightly more than one third places a small amount of trust in them. But around one quarter say they don't trust these institutions at all. Where we have over time data, the clear pattern has been a sharp decrease in trust over the past four years.

The 2002 Afrobarometer asked people for their level of trust in 16 different institutions of the political system. To help make sense of public attitudes, we performed what is known as Factor and Reliability Analysis on the responses to all 16 items. Factor Analysis helps us understand whether the electorate see all these institutions in the same light, and respond to all of them in more or less the same general pattern, or whether they see one specific subset of institutions in a different way than others.

What we discovered was that people (at least in the most recent survey) seem to make subtle, but important distinctions when they respond to these items, and differentiate between four subsets of institutions. First, survey respondents offer the same pattern of responses to questions about the African National Congress and the institutions they dominate. That is people tend to offer the same type of responses to questions about Parliament, the President and the "ruling party" (or the ANC). But importantly, they also seem to see the Independent Electoral Commission, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and "public corporations such as Telkom, Eskom and SpoorNet" in the same light. Second, respondents offer a different set of coherent responses to lower level institutions of democracy: their local council, provincial government and provincial premier. Third, there is also a separate cluster or responses to the institutions of state authority and enforcement, the police, army and courts, but which also curiously includes traditional leaders and "opposition parties." A final object of specific attitudes comprise the independent news media (E-TV and newspapers).

We begin by examining changing levels of popular trust in the ANC and the institutions associated with it in the popular mind. As of September-October 2002, just over one third (37 percent) say they have "a lot" or "a very great deal" of trust in President Thabo Mbeki, while another 41 percent say they have "a little bit" of trust in him. This is a slight decrease from 2000, though there has been a small change in the wording of the question responses. At that point, 41 percent felt they could trust the President "most" or "almost all of the time." But both figures recorded during the Mbeki Administration are far lower than those recorded during the Mandela era. While 46 percent of blacks respondents trust Mbeki, just 11 percent of white respondents do.

Similarly, one-third place a high level of trust in Parliament (31 percent), which is down slightly from the 34 percent in 2000 and more sharply from the 57 percent of 1998. The sharpest fall-offs have occurred among black respondents, 70 percent of whom expressed high levels of trust in November 1998, falling to just 39 percent in the last two surveys.

#### *Trust In the President (1997-2002)*

|          | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Sept / Oct<br>2002 |
|----------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Total    | 61                  | 73               | 41                 | 37                 |
| Black    | 70                  | 84               | 48                 | 46                 |
| White    | 25                  | 36               | 17                 | 11                 |
| Coloured | 47                  | 49               | 33                 | 24                 |
| Indian   | 27                  | 44               | 4                  | 27                 |

1997-2000-- % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"

2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"

*Trust In Parliament (1995-2002)*

|          | Sept / Nov<br>1995 | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Sept / Oct<br>2002 |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Total    | 45                 | 42                  | 57               | 34                 | 31                 |
| Black    | 53                 | 50                  | 70               | 39                 | 39                 |
| White    | 24                 | 13                  | 18               | 11                 | 10                 |
| Coloured | 33                 | 27                  | 32               | 30                 | 17                 |
| Indian   | 31                 | 20                  | 26               | 7                  | 23                 |

1997-2000 - % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"

2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"

While only one third say they trust the "ruling party," the ANC (33 percent), 43 percent say they trust "public corporations, such as Telkom, Eskom or Spoornet." Trust has fallen sharply since 2000 in the IEC (31 percent, down from 49 percent in 2000) and the SABC (47 percent, down from the 62 percent registered in 2000). It is not clear to what has triggered the decline in trust of the IEC since it has undertaken no major public activities in this span. It may have suffered from a generalized decline of trust in political authority, and, or suffered from association with other government "commissions" that have been more active during this period. The SABC's image may have been harmed by recent widespread public criticism of government legislation that critics say intended to bring the SABC under tighter governmental control.

*Trust in South African Institutions (2000-2002)*

|  | 2000 | 2002 |
|--|------|------|
| The Ruling Party                                       | NA   | 33   |
| Public Corporations, such as Telkom, Eskom or Spoornet | NA   | 43   |
| Electoral Commission                                   | 49   | 31   |
| State Broadcasting Corporation                         | 62   | 47   |

2000 - % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"

2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"

In general, trust in provincial government has been cut in half, from 49 percent in 1998 to 28 percent in 2002. While there are significant racial differences, the far more interesting variations occur along provincial lines. As was true in 2000, the Free State government enjoys the highest levels of popular trust, while the government of Western Cape has now sunk to the lowest level of all nine provinces.

For the first time in 2002, we also asked about trust in the Premier of the province, and found an identical level of trust (28 percent). Given that the Premier is often the most, if not the only visible part of provincial government in the public eye, we can see a tight linkage between public attitudes toward the Premier and the provincial government in general. There are a few exceptions: the Premiers of Free State, Limpopo and Northern Cape, Winkie Dariko (57 percent), Ngoako Ramathlodi (51 percent) and Manne Dipico (39 percent) enjoy even higher levels of trust than the governments they lead.

Popular trust in local government has never been very high since the creation of transitional local authorities in 1995. This continues to be the case two years since the inauguration of the reinvented local authorities in 2000. Just one-fifth (20 percent) say they trust their local government. When broken down along the new types of local authorities, 15 percent of those citizens who live in a Metropolitan authorities trust it, as compared to 25 percent trust in towns and small towns, and 21 percent in rural areas. Within the specific metropolitan government, only 7 percent of respondents in Cape Town trust their local council (42 percent say they trust it "not at all"); 14 percent in Nelson Mandela metro, 14 percent across the three Gauteng metros, and 29 percent in Durban.

*Trust In Provincial Government By Province (1995-2002)*

|                 | Sept / Nov<br>1995 | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Nov<br>2002 |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Free State      | 47                 | 49                  | 48               | 45                 | 51          |
| Limpopo         | 30                 | 50                  | 57               | 35                 | 41          |
| KwaZulu / Natal | 21                 | 28                  | 39               | 22                 | 35          |
| Northern Cape   | 38                 | 21                  | 61               | 20                 | 31          |
| Mpumalanga      | 57                 | 43                  | 75               | 19                 | 31          |
| Gauteng         | 35                 | 42                  | 44               | 28                 | 23          |
| North West      | 42                 | 39                  | 64               | 41                 | 19          |
| Eastern Cape    | 24                 | 28                  | 52               | 20                 | 17          |
| Western Cape    | 32                 | 33                  | 35               | 27                 | 15          |
| Total           | 32                 | 37                  | 49               | 28                 | 28          |

*1997-2000 -- % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"*

*2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"*

*Trust in Provincial Government and Premier (2002)*

|                 | Provincial<br>Government | Premier |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Gauteng         | 23                       | 23      |
| Mpumalanga      | 31                       | 30      |
| Limpopo         | 41                       | 51      |
| North West      | 19                       | 19      |
| KwaZulu / Natal | 35                       | 30      |
| Free State      | 51                       | 57      |
| Eastern Cape    | 17                       | 15      |
| Northern Cape   | 31                       | 39      |
| Western Cape    | 15                       | 12      |
| Total           | 28                       | 28      |

*Trust In Local Government (1995-2000)*

|          | Sept / Nov<br>1995* | Sept / Nov<br>1995** | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Sept / Oct<br>2002 |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Total    | 16                  | 33                   | 31                  | 39               | 23                 | 20                 |
| Black    | 9                   | 41                   | 35                  | 44               | 25                 | 23                 |
| White    | 36                  | 14                   | 19                  | 23               | 11                 | 10                 |
| Coloured | 21                  | 26                   | 23                  | 280              | 22                 | 10                 |
| Indian   | 13                  | 14                   | 14                  | 21               | 14                 | 24                 |

*1997-2000-- % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"*

*2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"*

*\* View of Old Apartheid Era Local Government*

*\*\* Expectation of New Town Councils*

Over the past two years, trust in the South African Defence Force has declined sharply from 44 to 36 percent, possibly due to the Army's widely publicized problems maintaining readiness. Trust in the police has remained constant, but low at 35 percent, and view of the Courts of Law have declined four percentage points from 43 to 39 percent. Finally, 19 percent say they trust traditional leaders and just 12 percent say they trust "opposition parties" in general.

*Trust in South African Institutions (2000-2002)*

|                     | 2000 | 2002 |
|---------------------|------|------|
| Courts of law       | 43   | 39   |
| The police          | 35   | 35   |
| The Army            | 44   | 32   |
| Traditional Leaders | NA   | 19   |
| Opposition Parties  | NA   | 11   |

2000 - % "Most of the Time / Almost All of the Time"

2002 - % "A Lot / A Very Great Deal"

Consistent with the fall in trust in several other institutions, we see a sharp fall in expressed trust in newspapers, from 58 to 33 percent. 43 percent say they trust South Africa's independent broadcaster, E-TV.

*Trust in Independent Media (2000-2002)*

|  | 2000 | 2002 |
|--|------|------|
| Independent Press / Newspapers           | 58   | 33   |
| Independent Broadcasting Services (E-TV) | NA   | 43   |

*Trust in Government, South Africa (2002)*

|  | Not at all | A little bit | A lot | A very great deal | Don't Know / haven't heard enough |
|--|------------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The President  | 18         | 41           | 27    | 8                 | 4                                 |
| Parliament   | 20         | 43           | 25    | 7                 | 6                                 |
| Provincial Government                                    | 23         | 40           | 23    | 5                 | 9                                 |
| Provincial Premier                                       | 25         | 36           | 23    | 5                 | 12                                |
| Your local government                                    | 31         | 38           | 16    | 4                 | 10                                |
| The Ruling Party   | 25         | 35           | 24    | 9                 | 7                                 |
| Opposition Parties                                       | 44         | 32           | 10    | 2                 | 12                                |
| The Army   | 24         | 37           | 25    | 7                 | 7                                 |
| The police   | 22         | 41           | 28    | 8                 | 2                                 |
| Courts of law  | 15         | 39           | 29    | 10                | 6                                 |
| Traditional leaders                                      | 31         | 33           | 14    | 5                 | 16                                |
| Electoral Commission                                     | 19         | 36           | 22    | 8                 | 13                                |
| State Broadcasting Corporation (SABC TV or Radio)        | 12         | 34           | 33    | 14                | 8                                 |
| Independent broadcasting services (E-TV)                 | 12         | 33           | 30    | 13                | 12                                |
| Independent Press / Newspapers                           | 14         | 41           | 26    | 9                 | 10                                |
| Public Corporations (such as Telkom, Eskom and Spoornet) | 14         | 32           | 29    | 14                | 11                                |

*How much do you trust each of the following or haven't you heard enough about them to say?*

In general, race and province exercise the strongest demographic impact on trust in institutions. In general, all of these institutions are also more likely to be trusted by rural people (rather than urban), and by those with less (rather than more) formal education.

## How Democratic?

In a new democracy, whether or not people feel that their political system is legitimate and trustworthy may have a lot to do with a series of questions about the democratic and human rights content of the political system. First, how democratic is the country? Secondly, how satisfied are people with the way democracy works? Third, is the system responsive to people's needs and opinions? And finally, in the context of a country in transition, to what extent do people feel that the new regime has delivered to them political freedoms?

The perceived extent of democracy in South Africa appears to differ sharply depending on whom you ask. International analysts often give the country very favourable ratings. Freedom House, the critical international watchdog of democracy and civil liberties, defines South Africa as “free” meaning that is judged to protect a full range of political freedoms and civil rights.<sup>8</sup> Larry Diamond has called it a “liberal democracy,” one of the few in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, less than one half of all South Africans (47 percent) currently think the country’s level of democracy is acceptable. One in ten (13 percent) say it is a “full democracy” and one third (34 percent) say it’s a democracy “but with minor problems.” Thirty seven percent agree that it’s a democracy, but with “major problems” and almost one in ten (7 percent) say it’s “not a democracy.” This represents a sharp downward revision in the perceived “supply” of democracy from the political system as 60 percent said the country was wholly or largely democratic just two years ago, with the proportion who say the country is “completely democratic” has dropped in half from 26 to 13 percent.

*How Democratic Is the Way Your Country Is Governed (2002)*

|                                      | Total | Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| A full democracy                     | 13    | 14    | 7     | 12       | 14     |
| A democracy, but with minor problems | 34    | 38    | 28    | 24       | 29     |
| A democracy, with major problems     | 37    | 34    | 43    | 39       | 36     |
| Not a democracy                      | 7     | 7     | 6     | 7        | 14     |
| Don't know                           | 7     | 4     | 13    | 12       | 6      |
| Do not understand question           | 3     | 3     | 3     | 8        | 2      |

*In your opinion how much of a democracy is South Africa today?*

*How Democratic Is the Way Your Country Is Governed (2000-2002)*

|          | July /<br>August<br>2000 | October /<br>November<br>2002 |
|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total    | 60                       | 47                            |
| Black    | 65                       | 52                            |
| White    | 42                       | 35                            |
| Coloured | 52                       | 36                            |
| Indian   | 24                       | 43                            |

% “Full Democracy / Democracy With Minor Problems”

*Government Responsiveness to Public Opinion*

Besides the existence of regular, free and fair elections, perhaps the ultimate indicator of the health of representative democracy is the extent to which elected officials actually listen to and respond to public opinion and people’s interests. In order to measure people’s perceptions of the extent of government responsiveness to public opinion, we asked people “How much of the time do you think elected leaders, like parliamentarians or local councilors, try their best to look after the interests of people like you” and “to listen to what people like you have to say?” Just 13 percent felt that elected leaders tried to look after the interests of ordinary people “always” or “most of the time” and 11 percent felt they listened to public opinion. Fully one third (35 percent) said they “never” looked after people’s interests and another four in ten (39 percent) felt they “never” listened to ordinary people.<sup>10</sup> This picture of government responsiveness is low across the board, with few important differences by race or any other demographic characteristic like education, gender, income or age.



*Governmental Responsiveness, South Africa (2002)*

|   | Never | Some of the Time | Most of the Time | Always | Don't Know / haven't heard enough |
|---|-------|------------------|------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Look after the interest of people like you? | 35    | 51               | 11               | 2      | 2                                 |
| Listen to what people like you have to say? | 39    | 47               | 9                | 2      | 3                                 |

*How much of the time do you think elected leaders, like parliamentarians or local councillors, try their best to:*

Finally, the Afrobarometer also asks a standard international survey question about whether people are “satisfied with the way democracy works” in their country. Less than half (44 percent) are either “very” or “fairly” satisfied, eight points lower than in 2000 (52 percent) and 19 points lower than in 1998 (63 percent).

*Satisfaction With Democracy in South Africa (2002)*

|                                 | Total | Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| Very satisfied                  | 10    | 12    | 3     | 11       | 5      |
| Fairly satisfied                | 34    | 35    | 25    | 38       | 28     |
| Not very satisfied              | 28    | 28    | 36    | 18       | 27     |
| Not at all satisfied            | 19    | 19    | 20    | 17       | 27     |
| South Africa is not a democracy | 3     | 2     | 4     | 2        | 9      |
| Don't Know                      | 7     | 4     | 12    | 15       | 3      |

*Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa? Are you:*

*Satisfaction With Democracy, by Race (1995-2002)*

|          | Sept / Nov 1995 | June / July 1997* | November 1998 | July / August 2000 | October / November 2002 |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Total    | 41              | 38                | 63            | 52                 | 44                      |
| Black    | 47              | 45                | 74            | 59                 | 47                      |
| White    | 23              | 7                 | 28            | 26                 | 28                      |
| Coloured | 40              | 25                | 44            | 40                 | 49                      |
| Indian   | 38              | 13                | 33            | 11                 | 33                      |

*% “Fairly Satisfied / Very Satisfied”*

*\* 5 pt scale*

## How Corrupt?

The other key evaluation that may shape perceptions of government legitimacy and trustworthiness is the public’s judgment as to whether their representatives and government officials govern honestly. Idasa and Afrobarometer surveys from 1995 to 2000 have consistently found a widespread sense that significant proportions of government officials were involved in corruption. In 2002, however, we find important, positive changes in public opinion.

As of September-October 2002, just over one third (38 percent) of South Africans now say that “most” or “all” government officials are involved in corruption: Similarly, 23 percent now think “most” or “all” elected leaders, such as parliamentarians and local government councilors are corrupt. Also, 13 percent think that a similar proportion of officials in the President’s office are corrupt.

These figures represent a significant decline in public perceptions of corruption. The proportions who perceive significant levels of corruption in Parliament have dropped from 45 to 22

percent in 2002. Similarly, the figures for “government officials” have declined from 50 to 27 percent. It is also noteworthy that the stark racial differences in these perceptions seen over the past few years appear to be narrowing considerably.

*Perceptions of Government Corruption, South Africa (2002)*

|   | None | Some of them | Most of them | All of them | Don't know / Haven't heard enough to say |
|---|------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--|
| The President and Officials in his office                     | 26   | 42           | 8            | 5           | 18                                       |
| Elected Leaders, such as parliamentarians or local councilors | 13   | 53           | 17           | 6           | 12                                       |
| Government officials  | 11   | 52           | 22           | 5           | 10                                       |
| Police  | 7    | 49           | 30           | 8           | 7  |
| Border officials (e.g. customs and immigration)               | 12   | 36           | 20           | 9           | 25                                       |
| Judges and magistrates  | 21   | 44           | 11           | 4           | 20                                       |

*How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?*  
(% “All of them / Most-of them”)

*Perceived Corruption in President's Office (1995-2002)*

|          | June / July 1997 | Sept / Oct 2002 |
|----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Total    | 25               | 13              |
| Black    | 23               | 10              |
| White    | 42               | 21              |
| Coloured | 17               | 16              |
| Indian   | 30               | 30              |

*1995-2000: % “All, Almost All / Most”*

*2002: % “All of them / Most of Them”*

*Perceived Corruption Amongst Government Officials (1995-2002)*

|          | Sept / Nov 1995 | June / July 1997 | July / Aug 2000 | Sept / Oct 2002 |
|----------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total    | 46              | 50               | 50              | 27              |
| Black    | 48              | 49               | 47              | 25              |
| White    | 48              | 61               | 67              | 30              |
| Coloured | 31              | 39               | 42              | 26              |
| Indian   | 35              | 48               | 73              | 41              |

*1995-2000: % “All, Almost All / Most”*

*2002: % “All of them / Most of Them”*

*Perceived Corruption Amongst Members of Parliament (1995-2002)*

|          | June / July 1997 | November 1998 | July / Aug 2000 | Sept / Oct 2002 |
|----------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total    | 41               | 44            | 45              | 22              |
| Black    | 39               | 40            | 42              | 21              |
| White    | 58               | 59            | 61              | 26              |
| Coloured | 36               | 41            | 35              | 21              |
| Indian   | 42               | 56            | 78              | 36              |

*1995-2000: % “All, Almost All / Most”*

*2002: % “All of them / Most of Them”*

*(2002) Elected Leaders, such as parliamentarians or local councillors*

What should we make of these apparent positive, downward shifts in cynical views of government honesty? First of all, note that large majorities of citizens still perceive some levels of corruption in government. What seems to have shifted is the public's estimate of the scope of the problem. A large number of respondents who in past years have answered that "most" officials were corrupt now seem to have shifted their assessments downward to say that "some of them" are (though there is also a significant jump in the numbers of people who feel that "no" government officials are corrupt).

It is also possible that slight changes in question wording may have had a role to play. From 1995 to 2000, but not in 2002, Idasa and Afrobarometer surveys defined corruption for respondents as "where those in government and the civil service take money or gifts from the people and use it for themselves, or expect people to pay them money or a gift to do their job." This definition may have reminded respondents of the full array of type of corruption that they may not have considered if the question was asked on its own, as in 2002. The phrase "almost all" was removed in 2002, thus forcing respondents to choose the most extreme response to damn every single official in government.

*Perceptions of Corruption: Government Officials (2000-2002)*

|  | 2000<br>"Officials in the<br>Government" | 2002<br>"Government Officials" |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| All, Almost All  | 17                                       | 5                              | All of them                          |
| Most   | 34                                       | 22                             | Most of them                         |
| A Few, Some  | 36                                       | 52                             | Some of them                         |
| Almost none, None  | 4  | 11                             | None                                 |
| Or haven't you had a<br>chance to hear enough<br>about them? | 10                                       | 10                             | Don't know / Haven't<br>heard enough |

2000: "What about corruption? Corruption is where those in government and the civil service take money or gifts from the people and use it for themselves, or expect people to pay them extra money or a gift to do their job). How many \_\_\_\_\_ do you think are involved in corruption?"

2002: "How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?"

*Perceptions of Corruption: Members of Parliament / Elected Officials (2000-2002)*

|   | 2000<br>"People in Parliament" | 2002<br>"Elected leaders" |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| All, Almost All   | 16                             | 6                         | All of them                          |
| Most  | 30                             | 17                        | Most of them                         |
| A Few, Some   | 38                             | 53                        | Some of them                         |
| Almost None, None   | 5                              | 6                         | All of them                          |
| Or haven't you had a<br>chance to hear enough<br>about them | 12                             | 12                        | Don't know / Haven't<br>heard enough |

All that being said, there is no gainsaying the importance of such a trend. Significant proportions of South Africans seem to have revised their estimate of government corruption in a downward direction. What political events might be responsible for this? It could be due to high levels of publicity given to the efforts of the Scorpions, the South African Revenue Service, the censure of MP Winnie Mandela, and the parliamentary investigation into Arms Deal. Even though NGOs and the news media were skeptical the arms investigation, the attention that it and of all these actions drew may have been sufficient for ordinary people to conclude that something was being done to reduce the levels of public corruption.

## How Much Capacity?

Another possible factor shaping the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the democratic political system may be people's sense of government's capacity to solve the important problems facing the country, to enforce the law, and to serve them as individuals. The 2002 Afrobarometer asked respondents about each of these.

### *Ability to Solve Problems*

We find little evidence to suggest that South Africans have become cynical about the ability of government to address the major problems confronting the society. After asking people to tell us what the most important problems facing the country that government should address (a separate report focuses on exactly how South Africans define these problems<sup>11</sup>), we then asked them "What proportion of this country's problems do you think government can solve? Fully four in ten (40 percent) say that government should be able to solve "most" of the problems facing the country; 29 percent expect government to solve at least "some of them." Only one in ten say that government can solve "very few" (11 percent) or "none" (2 percent).

Differences in racial categories and provincial categories appear to be the most important demographic factors that distinguish between perceptions of government capacity. But the direction of the racial impacts is not always consistent. Black respondents are most optimistic about the capacity of government to address most of society's problems, Indians the least.

### *Ability to Solve National Problems (2002)*

|                  | Total | Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| All of them      | 17    | 19    | 11    | 15       | 8      |
| Most of them     | 40    | 43    | 34    | 38       | 29     |
| Some of them     | 29    | 27    | 38    | 28       | 30     |
| Very few of them | 11    | 9     | 13    | 14       | 25     |
| None of them     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 3        | 8      |
| Don't know       | 2     | 1     | 3     | 3        | 2      |

*What proportion of this country's problems do you think government can solve?*

### *An Accessible State?*

Another indicator of public perceptions of government capacity is the extent to which they use government services, and feel that it is relatively easy to do so. A well governed state is not only one that is able to command compliance because people respect the law or the ability of the state to enforce the law, but it is also one in which people feel that they could approach the state to obtain important services without encountering a great deal of obstacles. We asked people: "Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services? Or do you never try and get these services from government?"

Over four fifths (86 percent) of South Africans feel that it is "easy" or "very easy" to register to vote (86 percent). Three quarters (77 percent) say it is easy or very easy to obtain a place in a primary school for a child. And seven in ten say it is easy to obtain an identity document (70 percent).

These proportions drop quite drastically, however, with regard to three other services. Just over one half (54 percent) of all South Africans say it is easy or relatively easy to obtain household services like water, electricity or a telephone, and just four in ten (41 percent) say it is easy to get help from the police. Indeed, one in ten (12 percent) say they "never try" to get help from the police. Finally, less than one quarter (23 percent) say it is easy to obtain a loan or payment from government.

(and 32 percent say they never try). White respondents are most likely to think that the state could enforce the law if they or someone like themselves broke the law.

*Accessibility of the State, South Africa (2002)*

|   | Very Easy | Easy | Difficult | Very Difficult | Never Try | Don't Know |
|---|-----------|------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Registering to vote   | 35        | 51   | 8         | 2              | 3         | 2          |
| A place in primary school for a child   | 31        | 46   | 10        | 3              | 6         | 3          |
| An identity document (such as a birth certificate, driver's license, or passport) | 28        | 42   | 19        | 9              | 2         | <1         |
| Household services (like piped water, electricity, or telephone)                  | 19        | 36   | 20        | 15             | 8         | 2          |
| Help from the police when you need it   | 10        | 31   | 27        | 18             | 12        | 2          |
| A loan or payment from government (such as agricultural credit)                   | 8         | 15   | 19        | 14             | 32        | 13         |

*Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services? Or do you never try and get these services from government?)*

*Access to the State, by Race (2002)*

|          | Identity document | Primary School placement | Household services | Register to vote | Loan       | Police     |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Black    | 27<br>(1)         | 13<br>(7)                | 42<br>(12)         | 8<br>(4)         | 32<br>(46) | 46<br>(16) |
| White    | 33<br>(3)         | 7<br>(18)                | 13<br>(9)          | 17<br>(7)        | 29<br>(50) | 37<br>(10) |
| Coloured | 16<br>(2)         | 13<br>(7)                | 25<br>(5)          | 5<br>(6)         | 33<br>(30) | 50<br>(10) |
| Indian   | 47<br>(6)         | 14<br>(29)               | 30<br>(4)          | 26<br>(4)        | 45<br>(33) | 44<br>(10) |

*% "Difficult / Very Difficult" (% "Don't Know / Never Try" In Brackets)*

Public responses reveal stark regional disparities in government capacity: disparities that parallel the legacies of South Africa's fractured past. In general, government capacity, as manifested in these responses, is weakest in provinces incorporating former bantustan homelands: which means provincial governments that include large numbers of poorly trained former bantustan civil servants. For instance, while just one in ten respondents in Northern Cape (12 percent) or one in five in Western Cape (22 percent) reported difficulty obtaining household services, this was true of four in ten respondents in Northwest (42 percent), KwaZulu-Natal (44 percent) and one half in Limpopo (55 percent).

Yet the same patterns tend to repeat themselves even when it comes to national government responsibilities. For example, 4 percent and 9 percent of Northern and Western Cape respondents respectively report difficulties in obtaining an identity document, in contrast to one quarter of respondents in Mpumalanga (26 percent), Gauteng (28 percent), Limpopo (29 percent), one third in Eastern Cape (35 percent) and four in ten in KwaZulu-Natal (44 percent).

*Perceptions of the “User Friendliness” of the State By Province (2002)*

|               | Identity document | Primary school placement | Register to Vote | Household Services | Govt. Payment / Loan | Help from Police |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Northern Cape | 4<br>(2)          | 2<br>(4)                 | 0<br>(2)         | 12<br>(6)          | 30<br>(40)           | 15<br>(16)       |
| Free State    | 22<br>(1)         | 9<br>(20)                | 4<br>(5)         | 21<br>(10)         | 29<br>(49)           | 31<br>(11)       |
| Northwest     | 15<br>(1)         | 4<br>(4)                 | 7<br>(2)         | 42<br>(10)         | 36<br>(41)           | 62<br>(15)       |
| Gauteng       | 28<br>(1)         | 13<br>(10)               | 15<br>(3)        | 27<br>(5)          | 33<br>(44)           | 47<br>(12)       |
| Western Cape  | 9<br>(2)          | 8<br>(6)                 | 4<br>(7)         | 22<br>(9)          | 35<br>(27)           | 53<br>(10)       |
| Mpumalanga    | 26<br>(2)         | 21<br>(10)               | 9<br>(4)         | 36<br>(16)         | 27<br>(50)           | 45<br>(16)       |
| Eastern Cape  | 35<br>(4)         | 16<br>(11)               | 15<br>(5)        | 38<br>(27)         | 26<br>(53)           | 49<br>(14)       |
| KwaZulu Natal | 44<br>(3)         | 19<br>(8)                | 12<br>(5)        | 44<br>(8)          | 36<br>(47)           | 40<br>(23)       |
| Limpopo       | 29<br>(0)         | 21<br>(7)                | 3<br>(6)         | 55<br>(1)          | 34<br>(45)           | 40<br>(6)        |

% “Difficult / Very Difficult” (% “Don’t Know / Never Try” In Brackets)

*Personal Experience With Government Corruption*

Another aspect of the accessibility and usability of the state is the extent to which people are victimized by corrupt officials when they attempt to interact with it. Thus, regardless of whether people think government is corrupt, it is also important to know how much corruption do they actually encounter in their interactions with various parts of government?

We asked people how often in the past year they had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for some public official in order to obtain from government a document or permit, receive a household service, get a child into school, cross a border, or avoid a problem with the police. Across all these areas where people interact with government, an average of 5 percent had to do so, ranging from a high of 6 percent who paid a bribe to a police officer to avoid some problem, to a low of 3 percent who encountered problems trying to cross an international border. This confirms our finding in the 1999-2000 Afrobarometer that personal experience or victimization by corruption are far lower than public perceptions thereof.<sup>12</sup>

In racial terms, blacks (6 percent) are only slightly more likely to encounter corruption in everyday encounters with government as Coloured (4 percent) and Indian respondents (3 percent), while all three are more likely than whites (2 percent). There is no evidence that people with lower levels of income, women, the less educated, or the elderly are especially likely to fall prey to official corruption. Of all the demographic factors at our disposal, province of residence appears to be the strongest predictor of whether or not one would be victimized by corrupt officials. Residents of Limpopo report being victimized at double the rate (an average of 13 percent across these different aspects) of provinces with the next highest prevalence, KwaZulu-Natal (6 percent) and Gauteng (6 percent).

*Public Experience With Corruption, South Africa (2002)*

|   | Never | Once or Twice | A Few Times | Often | Don't Know |
|---|-------|---------------|-------------|-------|------------|
| Get a document or permit  | 94    | 4             | 1           | 1     | 1          |
| Get a household service (liked piper water, electricity or phone) | 94    | 2             | 1           | 2     | 1          |
| Get a child into school   | 95    | 2             | 1           | 1     | 1          |
| Cross a border  | 95    | 1             | 1           | 1     | 2          |
| Avoid a problem with the police                                   | 93    | 3             | 1           | 2     | 1          |

*In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to government officials in order to?*

*Personal Experience With Corruption, by Province (2002)*

|               | Document / Permit | Household Service | School Placement | Border Crossing | Avoid Problem With Police | Average |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Limpopo       | 11                | 17                | 7                | 14              | 18                        | 13      |
| KwaZulu Natal | 7                 | 7                 | 7                | 3               | 4                         | 6       |
| Gauteng       | 7                 | 6                 | 5                | 3               | 9                         | 6       |
| Northwest     | 5                 | 2                 | 2                | 4               | 7                         | 4       |
| Mpumalanga    | 7                 | 2                 | 4                | 3               | 9                         | 3       |
| Western Cape  | 3                 | 2                 | 2                | <1              | 4                         | 2       |
| Eastern Cape  | 2                 | 2                 | 2                | 1               | 2                         | 2       |
| Northern Cape | 2                 | 0                 | 0                | 0               | 2                         | 1       |
| Free State    | 1                 | 1                 | 1                | 1               | 1                         | 1       |

*Ability to enforce the law*

We have already seen that approximately seven in ten think that law enforcement agencies such as SARS, the Courts or the Police have the right to enforce the law in all occasions. Do, however, South Africans at least feel that such agencies have the capacity to do so? We addressed this issue by presenting respondents with three different types of law-breaking, and then asking them “How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself” did such a thing?

Eight in ten (78 percent) South Africans say it is “likely” or “very likely” that the “authorities could enforce the law” if they or a person like themselves “committed a serious crime.” However, significantly lower percentages felt this would happen if they failed to “pay a tax on some income they earned” (69 percent) or “obtained household services like electricity and water” “without paying failed to pay for a household service (66 percent). Interestingly, the sense that the state will enforce the law is wider than the perceived moral authority of the state’s enforcement agencies.

However, while these are important bases of respect for the state’s capacity to enforce the law, it is quite clearly not widespread enough. This means that 13 percent feel there is a good chance they could get away with committing a crime, 18 percent feel they could conceal tax and get away with it, and 22 percent think it’s quite possible to get their services without paying for them. While the question format and wording have changed slightly since 2000, it appears that there has been a slight increase in public estimates of the capacity of criminal enforcement, no change in the capacity of tax enforcement, and a slight decrease in the capacity of rates and services enforcement.

*Perceived State Ability to Enforce the Law, South Africa (2002)*

|   | Not at all likely | Not very likely | Likely | Very likely | Don't know |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Committed a serious crime   | 6                 | 7               | 34     | 44          | 9          |
| Did not pay a tax on some income they earned                            | 8                 | 10              | 35     | 34          | 13         |
| Obtained household services (like water and electricity) without paying | 10                | 12              | 34     | 32          | 12         |

*How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself?*

*Enforcing the Law*

|          | 2000 | 2002 |
|----------|------|------|
| Total    | 72   | 77   |
| Black    | 74   | 77   |
| White    | 66   | 82   |
| Coloured | 77   | 79   |
| Indian   | 59   | 71   |

*2000: What if a person like yourself committed a serious crime? How likely is it that the police would catch and charge them? (% Likely / Very Likely)*

*2002: How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself committed a serious crime? (% Likely / Very Likely)*

*Enforcing Tax Collection*

|          | 2000 | 2002 |
|----------|------|------|
| Total    | 71   | 69   |
| Black    | 68   | 65   |
| White    | 80   | 82   |
| Coloured | 81   | 73   |
| Indian   | 85   | 70   |

*2000: What about if a person like yourself cheated and did not pay a tax that they owed the government (like a tax on income they get from sources other than a normal salary?) How likely is it that the Receiver of Revenue (SARS) would find out and penalize them?" (% Likely / Very Likely)*

*2002: How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself did not pay a tax on some income they earned? (% Likely / Very Likely)*

*Enforcing Payment for Services*

|          | 2000 | 2002 |
|----------|------|------|
| Total    | 73   | 66   |
| Black    | 70   | 63   |
| White    | 84   | 78   |
| Coloured | 85   | 71   |
| Indian   | 87   | 65   |

*2000: And if a person like yourself were to obtain their services without paying for them (like water and electricity), how likely is that your local council would find out and cut off their services? (% Likely / Very Likely)*

*2002: How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself obtained household services (like water and electricity) without paying? (% Likely / Very Likely)*

We have seen how provincial disparities in government capacity reflect the legacies of bantustan government. However, we can also see many of the same regional patterns in responses about enforcement capacity, which is largely a national rather than provincial responsibility. Thus, these patterns may also reflect a legacy of a limited presence of the Pretoria government in these



areas. For example, while an average of one in ten respondents feel they could get away with a crime or not paying taxes or rates in Northern Cape (11 percent), or Western Cape, Free State, Northwest or Gauteng (13 percent each), an average of one fifth of respondents in KwaZulu-Natal (22 percent) and almost one third of Limpopo (31 percent) respondents felt they could do so.

*Perceptions of State Enforcement Capacity, by Province (2002)*

|               | Commit a Serious Crime | Evaded Tax | Obtained Free Services | Average |
|---------------|------------------------|------------|------------------------|---------|
| Northern Cape | 8                      | 12         | 13                     | 11      |
| Free State    | 3                      | 11         | 24                     | 13      |
| Western Cape  | 8                      | 13         | 17                     | 13      |
| Northwest     | 12                     | 14         | 12                     | 13      |
| Gauteng       | 8                      | 13         | 17                     | 13      |
| Mpumalanga    | 13                     | 20         | 21                     | 18      |
| Eastern Cape  | 16                     | 21         | 26                     | 21      |
| KwaZulu Natal | 20                     | 24         | 26                     | 22      |
| Limpopo       | 23                     | 34         | 36                     | 31      |

% "Not Likely" / % "Not Likely At All"

## Government Effectiveness

We now turn to examine South Africans evaluations of recent government performance, both at the general level, but also at a detailed level of specific policy performance. But before we examine these results, it is important to set the economic stage against which people evaluated government performance.

### *Recent Economic Trends*

As of September-October 2002, more South Africans gave a negative assessment of their own personal living conditions (46 percent) than positive (38 percent). About as many say their own conditions had improved in the past year (32 percent) as had deteriorated (29 percent). However, more people were optimistic that their conditions would get better in the next twelve months (42 percent) than would get worse (13 percent). While there are few racial differences in assessments of present personal conditions (though Indians are significantly more positive), whites are far less positive in their evaluations of recent trends and much less optimistic about the future (along with Indians).

*Evaluations of Personal Economic Conditions (2002)*

|  | Very Bad   | Fairly bad | Neither | Fairly good | Very good   | Don't know |
|--|------------|------------|---------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Present living conditions                                | 23         | 23         | 17      | 32          | 6           | 1          |
|  | Much worse | Worse      | Neither | Better      | Much Better | Don't know |
| Your living conditions compared to 12 months ago         | 6          | 23         | 37      | 27          | 5           | 2          |
| Expectations for own living conditions in 12 months time | 6          | 17         | 24      | 28          | 14          | 11         |

*Evaluations of Personal Economic Conditions, by Race (2002)*

|  | Total | Black | White | Coloured | Indian |
|--|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| Your present living conditions                       | 37    | 36    | 38    | 37       | 55     |
| Your living conditions now compared to 12 months ago | 33    | 33    | 21    | 30       | 30     |
| Your living conditions in 12 months                  | 42    | 49    | 17    | 41       | 20     |
| Your living conditions vs. others                    | 49    | 52    | 41    | 38       | 59     |

% "Fairly good / Very good" or "Better / Much Better"

However, as of September-October 2002, positive assessments of the national economy (33 percent) and of recent national economic trends (30 percent) were at the highest level recorded by any Idasa survey since 1995. Economic optimism also returned as 41 percent said they expected the national economy to improve over the next twelve months, up from only 29 percent in 2000.

*Evaluations of the National Economy In South Africa (1995 to 2002)*

|           | Sept / Nov 1995 | June / July 1997 | September 1998 | Oct / Nov 1998 | Feb / March 1999 | April 1999 | Aug / Sept 2000 | September / October 2002 |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Past Year | 30              | 27               | 25             | 32             | 29               | 31         | 15              | 33                       |
| Present   | NA              | 21               | 17             | 25             | 20               | 20         | 15              | 30                       |
| Future    | NA              | 44               | 34             | 50             | 47               | 51         | 29              | 41                       |

% who says the national economy has improved over the **past year**

% satisfied with *present economic conditions*

% who expect the national economy to improve in the **future**.

Source: September 1998 to April 1999 surveys taken from Opinion '99

Overall, 44 percent felt that the country was headed in the "right direction," a nine percentage point increase over the 2000 survey. It is true, however, that overall optimism is still below the levels witnessed in the run up to the 1999 election, and far lower than those which characterized the country in 1994 and 1995. There are also racial differences in overall outlook: whereas 51 percent of blacks say we are headed in the right direction, 74 percent of Indians and 55 percent of whites think things are going in the "wrong direction."

*Overall direction of the country*

|                 | June 1994 | Nov 1994 | May / June 1995 | Nov 1995 | May / June 1996 | Nov 1996 | June 1998 | Sept 1998 | Oct / Nov 1998 | Feb / March 1999 | April 1999 | Aug / Sept 2000 | Sept / Oct 2002 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Right Direction | 76        | 62       | 64              | 66       | 57              | 56       | 43        | 43        | 48             | 54               | 53         | 35              | 44              |
| Wrong Direction | 6         | 18       | 14              | 17       | 25              | 27       | 41        | 44        | 39             | 32               | 28         | 55              | 41              |
| Don't know      | 18        | 20       | 22              | 17       | 18              | 17       | 16        | 13        | 14             | 14               | 19         | 10              | 16              |

"What about the overall direction of the country? Would you say that the country is going in the right direction, in the wrong direction or don't you know?"

Source: June 1994 to June 1998 surveys provided by Markinor; September 1998 to April 1999 taken from Opinion '99.

*Overall Direction of Country, by Race*

|          | June<br>1994 | Nov<br>1994 | May<br>1995 | Nov<br>1995 | May<br>1996 | Nov<br>1996 | May<br>1997 | June<br>1998 | Sept<br>1998 | Oct /<br>Nov<br>1998 | Feb /<br>Mar<br>1999 | April<br>1999 | Aug<br>/<br>Sept<br>2000 | Sept<br>/<br>Oct<br>2002 |
|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black    | 80           | 77          | 70          | 76          | 64          | 66          | 62          | 52           | 53           | 59                   | 66                   | 66            | 42                       | 51                       |
| White    | 70           | 50          | 43          | 38          | 31          | 22          | 18          | 10           | 12           | 11                   | 16                   | 12            | 9                        | 24                       |
| Coloured | 73           | 54          | 60          | 58          | 49          | 50          | 35          | 29           | 23           | 26                   | 31                   | 35            | 25                       | 39                       |
| Indian   | 77           | 55          | 57          | 47          | 44          | 28          | 24          | 9            | 17           | 18                   | 23                   | 17            | 9                        | 21                       |

*% saying the country is going in the Right Direction*

*General Government Performance*

Overall, public approval of political leaders stabilized between the 2000 and 2002 Afrobarometer surveys. As of September-October 2002, one half of all South Africans (51 percent) approved of the job President Mbeki had done in the previous twelve months. This is statistically the same rating as he received in our last Afrobarometer survey in July-August 2000. At that time, Mbeki's ratings had just slipped quite dramatically over the previous six months. While the overall rating has stayed at that level, it has recovered slightly among black respondents, now at 60 percent approval, up from 56 percent in 2000 as well as among Indian respondents.

Public approval of the performance of "Members of Parliament" has also remained steady, at 45 percent. Again, there has been some increase among black respondents, and a large one amongst Indian respondents, there has also been a drop in coloured approval of MPs job performance.

Nationally, approval of the performance of the Members of Provincial Assemblies has dropped two points, down to 37percent. Approval of the performance of Premiers increased by four points. However, both of these aggregate trends mask some important provincial variations. The highest ratings are given by Limpopo residents both to their MPLs and to their Premier Ngoako Ramathlodi. The case of Limpopo also demonstrates that effective political leadership, as well as recent growth in the provincial economy, can overcome many of the problems of a problematic state machinery. The government and Premiers of Free State and Northern Cape also receive relatively positive assessments. At the other end of the spectrum, the government and Premier of Western Cape received significantly worse evaluations than any other province. It should be noted however, that because of recent shuffles in party control of that province, 30 percent said they hadn't heard enough about the job of Marthinus Van Schalkwyk to have an opinion (compared to 12 to 18 percent for all other Premiers, with the exception of Limpopo where only 4 percent said they didn't know enough about Ramathlodi to rate him). The results for evaluations of provincial and local government in Western Cape reported throughout this report also emphasize that ineffective political leadership can squander many of the advantages of a relatively intact and efficient state bureaucracy.

Finally, while local government underwent a major transformation in the late 1990s and a new system was inaugurated in 2000, public approval of the job performance of local councillors stands at 33 percent nationally, about where it was in 2000.

However, we see important differences once we disaggregate the results. For example, 40 percent of blacks approve of their councillors' performance compared to around 20 percent of all other respondents. When broken down along the different types of local government designed by the recent reforms, we find that approval of local councillor performance stands at 40 percent in towns and small towns, compared to just 27 percent across the country's metropolitan local authorities, and 34 percent in rural areas. Looking within the major metropolitan councils, public satisfaction is lowest in Cape Town (21 percent), but not much better in the three Gauteng metro's (24 percent) or Nelson Mandela (26 percent). However, satisfaction is sharply higher in Durban (50 percent). Public approval of local government is highest in Free State (43 percent), KwaZulu-Natal

(41 percent) and Limpopo (41 percent), and lowest in Mpumalanga (31 percent), Northwest (31 percent), Gauteng (26 percent) and Western Cape (22 percent).

*Presidential Job Approval*

|          | Sept / Nov<br>1995 | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Nov<br>2002 |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Total    | 76                 | 64                  | 79               | 50                 | 51          |
| Black    | 85                 | 73                  | 89               | 56                 | 60          |
| White    | 54                 | 31                  | 45               | 25                 | 24          |
| Coloured | 61                 | 52                  | 64               | 48                 | 40          |
| Indian   | 59                 | 33                  | 45               | 9                  | 42          |

% "Approve / Strongly Approve"

*Members of Parliament Job Approval*

|          | Sept / Nov<br>1995 | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | September<br>October 2002 |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Total    | 53                 | 46                  | 64               | 45                 | 45                        |
| Black    | 63                 | 55                  | 78               | 51                 | 55                        |
| White    | 24                 | 13                  | 20               | 20                 | 19                        |
| Coloured | 39                 | 31                  | 41               | 42                 | 27                        |
| Indian   | 48                 | 24                  | 37               | 16                 | 29                        |

% "Approve / Strongly Approve"

*Provincial Government Job approval Ratings (by Province)*

|                 | Sept / Nov<br>1995 | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | September<br>October<br>2002 |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Limpopo         | 91                 | 40                  | 70               | 52                 | 60                           |
| Free State      | 86                 | 54                  | 57               | 64                 | 51                           |
| Northern Cape   | 74                 | 38                  | 63               | 27                 | 45                           |
| KwaZulu / Natal | 74                 | 26                  | 48               | 34                 | 38                           |
| Eastern Cape    | 87                 | 25                  | 57               | 33                 | 35                           |
| North West      | 90                 | 39                  | 58               | 54                 | 33                           |
| Gauteng         | 66                 | 44                  | 49               | 37                 | 32                           |
| Mpumalanga      | 79                 | 46                  | 72               | 31                 | 31                           |
| Western Cape    | 59                 | 32                  | 53               | 33                 | 21                           |
| Total           | 76                 | 36                  | 56               | 39                 | 37                           |

1995-2000: Provincial Government

2002: Members of the Provincial Legislative Assembly

% "Approve / Strongly Approve"

*Provincial Premier Job Approval (1998-2002)*

|                 | November<br>1998 | July / Aug<br>2000 | Nov<br>2002 |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Limpopo         | 61               | 54                 | 74          |
| Free State      | 45               | 64                 | 59          |
| Northern Cape   | 56               | 38                 | 53          |
| KwaZulu / Natal | 48               | 33                 | 47          |
| Mpumalanga      | 63               | 31                 | 41          |
| North West      | 52               | 55                 | 41          |
| Gauteng         | 40               | 34                 | 36          |
| Eastern Cape    | 49               | 34                 | 33          |
| Western Cape    | 41               | 30                 | 20          |
| Total           | 49               | 39                 | 43          |

% "Approve / Strongly Approve"

*Local Government Job Approval, by Race (1997 to 2002)*

|          | June / July<br>1997 | November<br>1998 | Aug / Sept<br>2000 | October-<br>November<br>2002 |
|----------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Total    | 30                  | 44               | 31                 | 33                           |
| Black    | 32                  | 47               | 34                 | 40                           |
| White    | 21                  | 31               | 21                 | 18                           |
| Coloured | 27                  | 46               | 33                 | 19                           |
| Indian   | 19                  | 29               | 22                 | 23                           |

% "Approve / Strongly Approve"

*Specific Government Performance*

We also asked people to offer a more detailed rating of government performance by asking people "How well would you say government is handling" a range of policy areas. The first important finding to emerge from this is the degree to which citizens are ready to discriminate across these policies, and criticize government in some areas and praise it in others.

Since 1994, Government has received quite positive evaluations in the areas of welfare and development. Associated with the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This is true, though to a slightly lesser extent, in 2002: government receives strong evaluations of its attempt to distribute welfare payments (73 percent), address the educational needs of all South Africans (61 percent), deliver basic services such like water and electricity (60 percent), and improve health services (54 percent). Importantly, 46 percent now say government is handling the issue of AIDS "fairly" or 'very well' up from the 38 percent measured in 2000 just following the international AIDS conference in Durban.

In terms of economic redistribution and equality the government received a mixed response. Just one in five (19 percent) say it has done a good job narrowing the income gap, a very significant decline over the past two years. Just one fifth feel it has done a good job making sure that everyone has enough to eat (21 percent). A somewhat positive rating was given to its handling of affirmative action (53 percent).

In the area of nation-building, 59 percent say the government has done a good job uniting all South Africans into one nation though approval of government's performance in this area during the Mbeki administration tends to be significantly lower than during the Mandela years.

However, when it comes to macro economic measures, government had received far less popular credit since 1994. In 2002, just 9 percent approved of its performance in job creation, 17 percent say it has done a good job controlling prices, and 38 percent approve of its performance in managing the overall economy. Ironically, it is in this area that the government has consistently won widespread praise from economic experts, foreign governments and international financial institutions.

The government continues to receive poor evaluations of its performance in reducing crime (23 percent). A new Afrobarometer question also finds that just 38 percent feel the government has done a good job reducing conflict between communities. Even though the public estimate of the extent of corruption appears to have improved, public opinions on government attempts to fight corruption are still negative (29 percent). Finally, public approval of the government's approach to Zimbabwe has moved in the opposite direction, with just 31 percent approving, down from 41 percent in 2000.

### *Economic Growth*

|                    | May-<br>June<br>1995 | Nov<br>1995 | May/<br>June<br>1996 | Nov<br>1996 | May/<br>June<br>1997 | Nov<br>1997 | March<br>1998 | Sept<br>1998 | Oct<br>Nov<br>1998 | Feb /<br>March<br>1999 | April<br>1999 | July<br>1999 | Nov<br>1999 | May<br>2000 | July /<br>Aug<br>2000 | Nov<br>2002 |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Creating Jobs      | 33                   | 31          | 36                   | 26          | 36                   | 32          | 23            | 12           | 23                 | 18                     | 24            | 24           | 25          | 20          | 10                    | 9           |
| Controlling Prices | 30                   | 37          | 38                   | 30          | 40                   | 39          | 36            | --           | 33                 | --                     | 42            | 40           | 46          | 41          | 17                    | 17          |
| Managing Economy   | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --            | 22           | 37                 | 41                     | 47            | 47           | 51          | 50          | 28                    | 38          |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

### *Economic Redistribution and Equality*

|                      | May/June<br>1995 | Nov<br>1995 | May/June<br>1996 | Nov<br>1996 | May/June<br>1997 | Nov<br>1997 | March<br>1998 | Oct/<br>Nov<br>1998 | April<br>1999 | July<br>1999 | Nov<br>1999 | May<br>2000 | July /<br>Aug<br>2000 | Nov<br>2002 |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Narrowing Income Gap | 43               | 46          | 52               | 47          | 52               | 53          | 45            | 57                  | 59            | 55           | 59          | 50          | 23                    | 19          |
| Affirmative Action   | 53               | 53          | 58               | 55          | 62               | 60          | 43            | 63                  | 64            | --           | 63          | 58          | 48                    | 54          |
| Enough to eat        | --               | --          | --               | --          | --               | --          | --            | --                  | --            | --           | --          | --          | --                    | 21          |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

### *Welfare and Development*

|                       | May/J<br>une<br>1995 | Nov<br>1995 | May/J<br>une<br>1996 | Nov<br>1996 | May/J<br>une<br>1997 | Nov<br>1997 | March<br>1998 | Sept<br>1998 | Oct /<br>Nov<br>1998 | Feb/<br>March<br>1999 | April<br>1999 | July<br>1999 | Nov<br>1999 | May<br>2000 | July /<br>Aug<br>2000 | Oct/<br>Nov<br>2002 |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Education             | 61                   | 64          | 70                   | 60          | 67                   | 69          | 52            | 47           | 55                   | --                    | 64            | 60           | 65          | 63          | 49                    | 61                  |
| Housing               | 34                   | 36          | 38                   | 32          | 44                   | 52          | 47            | 53           | 54                   | 54                    | 61            | 62           | 65          | 55          | 50                    | --                  |
| Basic Services        | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --            | 67           | 68                   | 68                    | 72            | 74           | 75          | 72          | 61                    | 60                  |
| Basic Health Services | 69                   | 62          | 74                   | 68          | 71                   | 73          | 67            | 57           | 64                   | 68                    | 66            | 66           | 68          | 65          | 43                    | 54                  |
| Welfare Payments      | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --            | --           | --                   | 65                    | 67            | 69           | 71          | 67          | 53                    | 73                  |
| HIV / AIDS            | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --            | --           | --                   | --                    | --            | --           | --          | --          | 38                    | 46                  |
| Combating malaria     | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --                   | --          | --            | --           | --                   | --                    | --            | --           | --          | --          | --                    | 41                  |

% "Fairly / Very Well"



### *Law and Order*

|   | May-June 1995 | Nov 1995 | May/June 1996 | Nov 1996 | May/June 1997 | Nov 1997 | Mar 1998 | Sept 1998 | Oct/Nov 1998 | Feb/Mar 1999 | April 1999 | July 1999 | Nov 1999 | May 2000 | July/Aug 2000 | Nov 2002 |
|---|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|---------------|----------|
| Reducing Crime                          | 42            | 40       | 45            | 31       | 41            | 40       | 31       | 17        | 27           | 19           | 26         | 32        | 28       | 36       | 18            | 23       |
| Resolving conflicts between communities | --            | --       | --            | --       | --            | --       | --       | --        | --           | --           | --         | --        | --       | --       | --            | 38       |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

### *Good Government*

|                     | Sept 1998 | Oct / Nov 1998 | April 1999 | July 1999 | Nov 1999 | May 2000 | Aug/Sept 2000 | Nov 2002 |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|---------------|----------|
| Fighting Corruption | 26        | 37             | 44         | 45        | 48       | 42       | 30            | 29       |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

### *Nation-Building*

|                                  | May-June 1995 | Nov 1995 | May-June 1996 | Nov 1996 | May-June 1997 | Nov 1997 | March 1998 | Sept 1998 | Oct – Nov 1998 | April 1999 | July 1999 | Nov 1999 | May 2000 | Aug / Sept 2000 | Nov 2002 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Uniting all SA's Into One Nation | 61            | 63       | 72            | 71       | 67            | 70       | 71         | 62        | 68             | 72         | 69        | 72       | 66       | 53              | 59       |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

### *Zimbabwe*

|                                    | Aug/Sept 2000 | Sept/ Oct 2002 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Handling the Situation in Zimbabwe | 41            | 31             |

% "Fairly / Very Well"

## Comparing the Present With the Past

Influential analysts of democratic transitions in Eastern and Central Europe have pointed out that even while large proportions of people in the former communist republics may think their new government are corrupt and ineffective, they still see it as far better than what they endured prior to 1990.<sup>13</sup> In other words, in new democracies, citizens' relative comparisons of that government with its alternatives may be more important than their absolute assessments of that government.

We have already seen South Africans' views on their trust in government, their sense of responsiveness, perceptions of corruption, and policy effectiveness. Now we review responses to questions that ask people whether their present governments are *more or less* trustworthy, responsive, corrupt, and effective, than government under the previous regime.

Thus we asked people, "Comparing the current government with the former Apartheid government, would you say the one we have now is more or less" trustworthy, corrupt, able to enforce the law, and able to deliver services. Just one fifth of South Africans (22 percent) think that government today is more trustworthy than under apartheid (34 percent actually say "less" and another 27 percent see no difference). Only one quarter say that it is less corrupt (52 percent say corruption has increased and 18 percent see no difference).

The post-1994 democratic government comes off better in terms of enforcement and delivery. Four in ten (39 percent) feel that government today is better able to enforce the law than under the apartheid regime (41 percent say "less" and 17 percent see no difference). Similarly 41 percent say government is more effective delivering services (though surprisingly, 35 percent think the old government did a better job delivering services).

Some of these results are puzzling. While there are strong racial differences, they are not stark and in none of these aspects do an absolute majority of black respondents say government is better now than before. What is more, while the comparative assessment of effectiveness has remained stable since 2000, relative assessments of trustworthiness and corruption have become worse.

None of these invidious comparisons should be taken to signal a desire to return to apartheid. Much of this apparent nostalgia may be fuelled by a fading memory of just what life used be like. But the fact that such perceptions do exist suggests deeply rooted problems in how the government "delivers" development goods and services to ordinary people, but also how it represents and interacts with citizens.

### *Comparing Government Under Democracy and Apartheid*

|                                       | Much Less | Less | About the same | More | Much More | Don't Know |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------|----------------|------|-----------|------------|
| Trustworthy                           | 12        | 22   | 27             | 21   | 11        | 7          |
| Able to enforce the law               | 15        | 26   | 17             | 27   | 12        | 4          |
| Effective in the delivery of services | 12        | 23   | 20             | 31   | 10        | 4          |
| Corrupt                               | 10        | 14   | 18             | 32   | 20        | 5          |

*"Comparing the current government with the former apartheid government, would you say that the one we have now is more or less:"*



*Democratic Versus Apartheid Government's Ability to Enforce the Law, by Race (2002)*

|          | Aug / Sept<br>2000 | 2002 |
|----------|--------------------|------|
| Total    | NA                 | 39   |
| Black    | NA                 | 43   |
| White    | NA                 | 25   |
| Coloured | NA                 | 37   |
| Indian   | NA                 | 23   |

% "More / Much More"

*Democratic Versus Apartheid Government's Effectiveness, by Race (2000 to 2002)*

|          | Aug / Sept<br>2000 | 2002 |
|----------|--------------------|------|
| Total    | 40                 | 41   |
| Black    | 47                 | 46   |
| White    | 12                 | 30   |
| Coloured | 27                 | 34   |
| Indian   | 9                  | 30   |

% "More / Much More"

*Democratic Versus Apartheid Government Corruption, by Race (2000 to 2002)*

|          | Aug / Sept<br>2000 | 2002 |
|----------|--------------------|------|
| Total    | 27                 | 24   |
| Black    | 29                 | 26   |
| White    | 20                 | 15   |
| Coloured | 28                 | 20   |
| Indian   | 11                 | 23   |

% "Less / Much Less"

*Democratic Versus Apartheid Government Trustworthiness, by Race (2000 to 2002)*

|          | Aug / Sept<br>2000 | 2002 |
|----------|--------------------|------|
| Total    | 37                 | 32   |
| Black    | 43                 | 38   |
| White    | 11                 | 15   |
| Coloured | 28                 | 21   |
| Indian   | 11                 | 22   |

% "More / Much More"

Finally, we report responses to a simple set of questions that set out a scale where 0 is the "worst form of governing a country" and 10 is the "best form of governing a country." It asks people to place on that scale "the way the country was governed" under *apartheid* (or the previous non-democratic regime in other countries), "our current system of government with regular elections where everyone can vote and there are at least two political parties," and finally the "political system of this country as you expect it to be in 10 years' time."<sup>14</sup>

As of October-November 2002, 30 percent of South Africans gave a positive evaluation (that is, a score of between 6 and 10) to the *apartheid* system of government, 12 percent neutral (a score of 5) and 57 percent gave it a negative score (from 0 to 4). In contrast, 54 percent gave a positive assessment of the present system of government, with 20 percent neutral, and 26 percent negative. Finally, 64 percent gave a positive rating to the system of government as they expect it to be in 2010, with 9 percent neutral and 21 percent negative.

There are two important trends revealed by the responses to this question since 1995. First, over the past eight years, the popular memory of what life was like under *apartheid* has actually become more nostalgic. This trend is true of *all* South Africans. As might be expected, white South Africans have consistently developed more nostalgic memories of government during those years, but so have coloured and Indian South Africans who, while clearly treated as second class citizens, enjoyed some economic and political advantages relative to black Africans. But even among blacks, we see a similar trend. In 1995, just 8 percent of black respondents gave apartheid a positive rating, that number has now increased to 20 percent, or one fifth. This suggests that as time has passed and memories of what life was really like then become dim, people tend to positively emphasize the things that they do not see under the present system and deemphasize the harsher aspects.

The second important trend revealed by these responses is that, with all of its warts, exhaustively emphasized in the preceding pages of this report, South Africans appear to be busy gradually adopting and accommodating themselves to life in a more democratic, though often less prosperous and more disorderly and violent society. Positive ratings of “the current system of government” were offered by 38 percent in 1995, but now by 54 percent. Perhaps most importantly, while just 12 percent of whites gave a positive evaluation to government under the new regime in 1995, 46 percent now do so in 2002. This trend also holds for coloured and Indian respondents.

Moreover, white South Africans’ views of how the country will be governed in ten years time have also become sharply less pessimistic: 44 percent now think that things will be positive at that point, compared to just 20 percent two years ago. Thus, the converse psychological process seems to be occurring with respect to the democratic regime. As people, especially racial minorities, become more accustomed to the new order, they seem to be coming to terms with it, even as they moan and grumble about its faults.

Beside race, we found that age played an important role in shaping views of these three scenarios. The way the country was governed under apartheid is seen most favourably by the oldest and most negatively by the youngest, especially those who have turned eighteen since 1990. While differences are smaller, it is the middle aged, those who grew up politically between Sharpeville and Soweto, who have the most positive assessments of the present. Finally, it is those who have come of age under the “new” South Africa – since Nelson Mandela walked out of jail in 1990 – who have the most positive views of this country’s political system ten years down the road. This is probably one of the most encouraging findings of this report.

#### *South Africans Compare Past, Present and Future Regimes*

|            | Rating of<br>“the way the country was governed<br>under apartheid” |       |      |      | Rating of<br>“Our current system of<br>government” |       |      |      | Rating of<br>“The political system as you expect<br>it to be in ten years time” |       |      |      |
|------------|--|-------|------|------|--|-------|------|------|---|-------|------|------|
|            | 1995   | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 | 1995   | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 | 1995  | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 |
| Positive   | 17   | 21    | 25   | 30   | 36   | 44    | 58   | 54   | 60  | 64    | 53   | 64   |
| Neutral    | 18   | 19    | 12   | 12   | 33   | 29    | 18   | 20   | 18  | 16    | 16   | 9    |
| Negative   | 65   | 60    | 63   | 57   | 31   | 27    | 25   | 26   | 22  | 18    | 32   | 21   |
| Don't Know | 0  | 0     | 0    | 1    | 0  | 0     | 0    | 1    | 0   | 0     | 0    | 6    |

*\*10 point scale: thus positive responses are scores 10 to 7, neutral is 5 and 6, and negative is 1 to 4. 1995 data taken from the South African version of the World Values Study.*

*South Africans Compare Past, Present and Future Regimes*

|          | Positive Ratings of<br>“the way the country was<br>governed under apartheid” |       |      |      | Positive Ratings of<br>“Our current system of<br>government” |       |      |      | Positive Ratings of<br>“the political system as you<br>expect it to be in ten years<br>time” |       |      |      |
|----------|--|-------|------|------|--|-------|------|------|--|-------|------|------|
|          | 1995   | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 | 1995   | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 | 1995   | 1998* | 2000 | 2002 |
| Black    | 8  | 14    | 17   | 20   | 50   | 55    | 63   | 57   | 80   | 76    | 60   | 74   |
| White    | 39   | 44    | 59   | 65   | 12   | 7     | 42   | 46   | 24   | 21    | 20   | 44   |
| Coloured | 11   | 26    | 41   | 33   | 27   | 27    | 44   | 43   | 55   | 55    | 45   | 58   |
| Indian   | 13   | 34    | 56   | 59   | 28   | 20    | 24   | 66   | 53   | 32    | 25   | 64   |

*\*10 point scale, thus positive responses are seen as scores 6-10-7, neutral as 5 and 6, and negative as 1 to 4.*

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).
- <sup>2</sup> Tom Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp.: 27-28.
- <sup>3</sup> Easton, *A Systems Analysis*, p. 273.
- <sup>4</sup> Easton, *A Systems Analysis*.
- <sup>5</sup> Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law*, pp. 30-33.
- <sup>6</sup> The relationship of race and a average index of responses to the four items is  $\eta^2 = .10$  ( $n=2395$ ), which explains just 1 percent of the variance in legitimacy.
- <sup>7</sup> Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics : Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 2d. ed. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1996), ch. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, "The 2001 Freedom House Survey," *Journal of Democracy* 13/1 (January 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> Larry Diamond, "Introduction," *Democratization in Africa*, Diamond, L & Plattner, M. eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
- <sup>10</sup> These figures are almost identical to similar questions asked in an August 2002 survey by the Electoral Task Team. 19 percent though that Parliamentarians looked after their interests "always" or "most of the time" (with 36 percent saying "never") and 17 percent felt that MPs listened to public opinion "always" or "most of the time" (with 38 percent saying "never"). The two questions also obtained virtually identical replies when asked about members of provincial legislative assemblies. See Roger South & Robert Mattes, *Popular Attitudes Toward the South African Electoral System: Report to the Electoral Task Team*, Democracy & Governance Occasional Papers No. 1 (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, September 2002).
- <sup>11</sup> Yul Derek Davids, Annie Dzenga & Robert Mattes, *The Changing Public Agenda? South Africans Assessments of Society's Most Pressing Problems*, Afrobarometer Briefing Paper, No. 6 (Cape Town / Accra / East Lansing: Afrobarometer, 2002) [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).
- <sup>12</sup> Robert Mattes & Michael Bratton, "Viewing Corruption in Southern Africa Through the Eyes of Ordinary Southern Africans," *Global Corruption Report* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2001).
- <sup>13</sup> Richard Rose, William Mishler & Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives: Understanding Post Communist Societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
- <sup>14</sup> Rose, Mishler & Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives*.